Launching of Sethusamudram Project

1215. SHRI MANOJ BHATTARCHARYA:
SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister has recently launched the Sethusamudram project of Kodiakkarai Coast in Tamil Nadu;

(b) if so, the details of the project including its estimated cost and sources of its funding;

(c) the objective of the proposed project;

(d) whether Government of Sri Lanka have expressed several reservations with regard to its project; and

(e) if so, details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Sethusamudram Ship Channel Project envisages cutting of a ship channel to connect the Gulf of Mannar and Bay of Bengal through Palk Bay and Palk Strait so that most of the ships, depending on draft required, moving between the east and the west coasts of India, could have a continuous navigable sea route around the Peninsula within India's own territorial waters. Once complete, the channel will save upto 424 nautical miles of navigable distance and upto 30 hours of sailing time for ships sailing between the east and the west coasts of the country. The sanctioned cost of the project is Rs. 2427.40 crores. A Special Purpose Vehicle, namely, 'Sethusamudram Corporation Limited' has been incorporated to raise finance and undertake the project. The project will be funded through a mix of equity and debt in the following manner:

(i)	Equity of the Central Government	—	Rs. 495.00 crores
(ii)	Equity contribution by partners of Sethusamudram Corporation Ltd.	—	Rs. 250.00 crores
(iii)	Equity through public offer/private placement/users	—	Rs. 226.00 crores
(iv)	Debt	—	Rs. 1456.40 crores
	TOTAL:		Rs. 2427.40 crores

(d) and (e) Some environmental and technical concerns have been raised by Sri Lanka in respect of this project. In this regard, two rounds of expert level bilateral deliberations have been held in New Delhi wherein it has been clarified to Sri Lankan delegation that while formulating the project, adequate care has been taken to ensure that adverse impact on environment is minimal. During the discussions, detailed presentations on the technical investigations and environmental impact assessment were made. Further, as requested by Sri Lankan delegation, some reports relating to technical investigations in respect of this project were also handed over.

Revival of HDPEL

1216. SHRI CHITTABRATA MAJUMDAR:
SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the revival scheme of Hooghly Dock and Port Engineering Ltd. has been examined by Board of Reconstruction of Public Sector Enterprises (BRPSE);

(b) if so, the recommendations of the Board; and

(c) if not, the reason for the delay?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) A proposal for Rehabilitation-cum-Restructuring of Hooghly Dock & Port Engineers Limited (HDPEL), Kolkata was sent to Board for Reconstruction of Public Sector Enterprises (BRPSE) on 20th April, 2005. The Board had initial round of discussions with officers of HDPEL and Department of Shipping and a presentation on this was also made to the Board on 8th July, 2005. The Board is yet to make recommendations on the proposal.

(c) Does not arise.

Implementation of National Highway Projects

1217. DR. VIJAY MALLYA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether his attention has been drawn to the poor implementation of the National Highway Projects;